

The
Morristown Ghost



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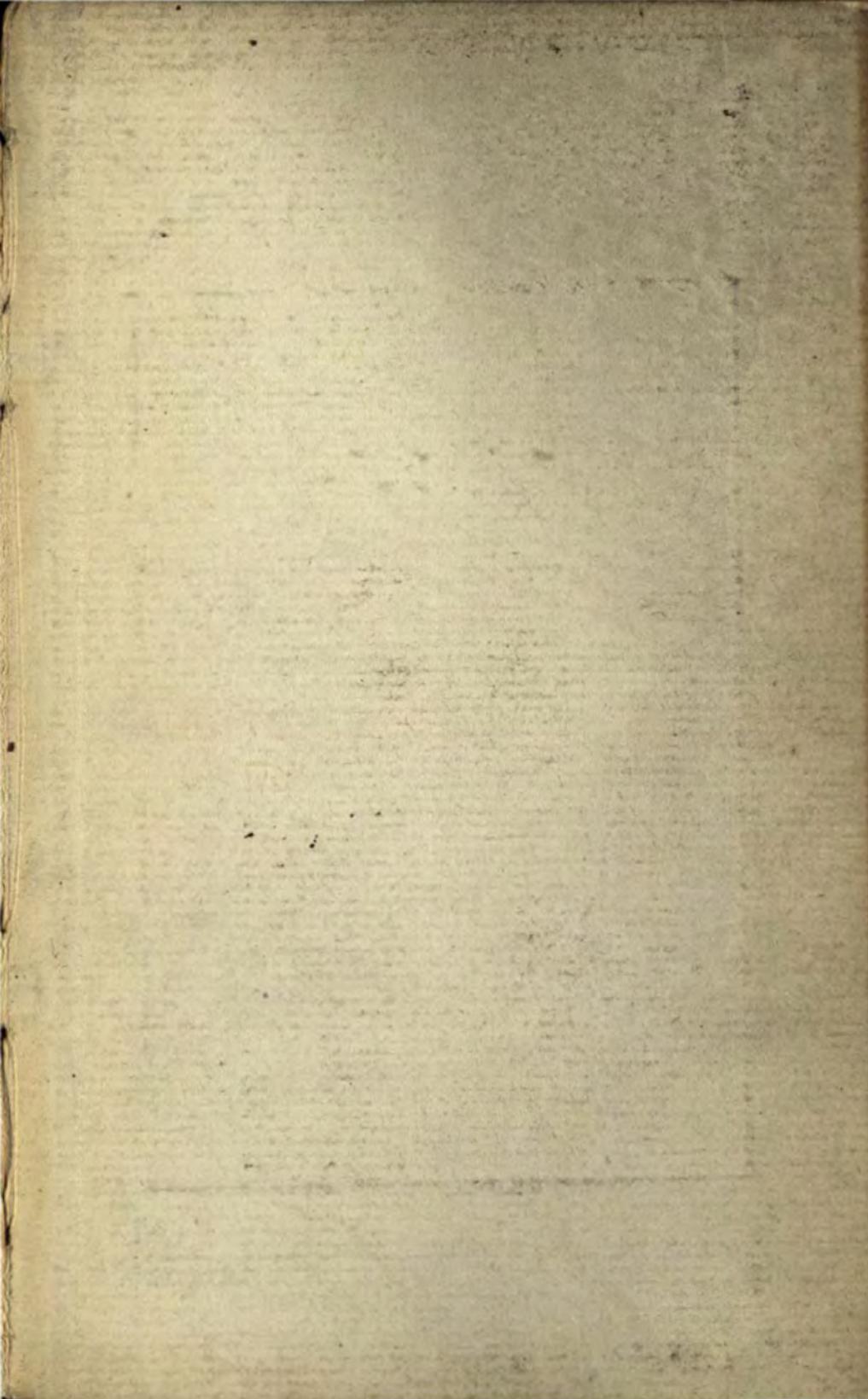


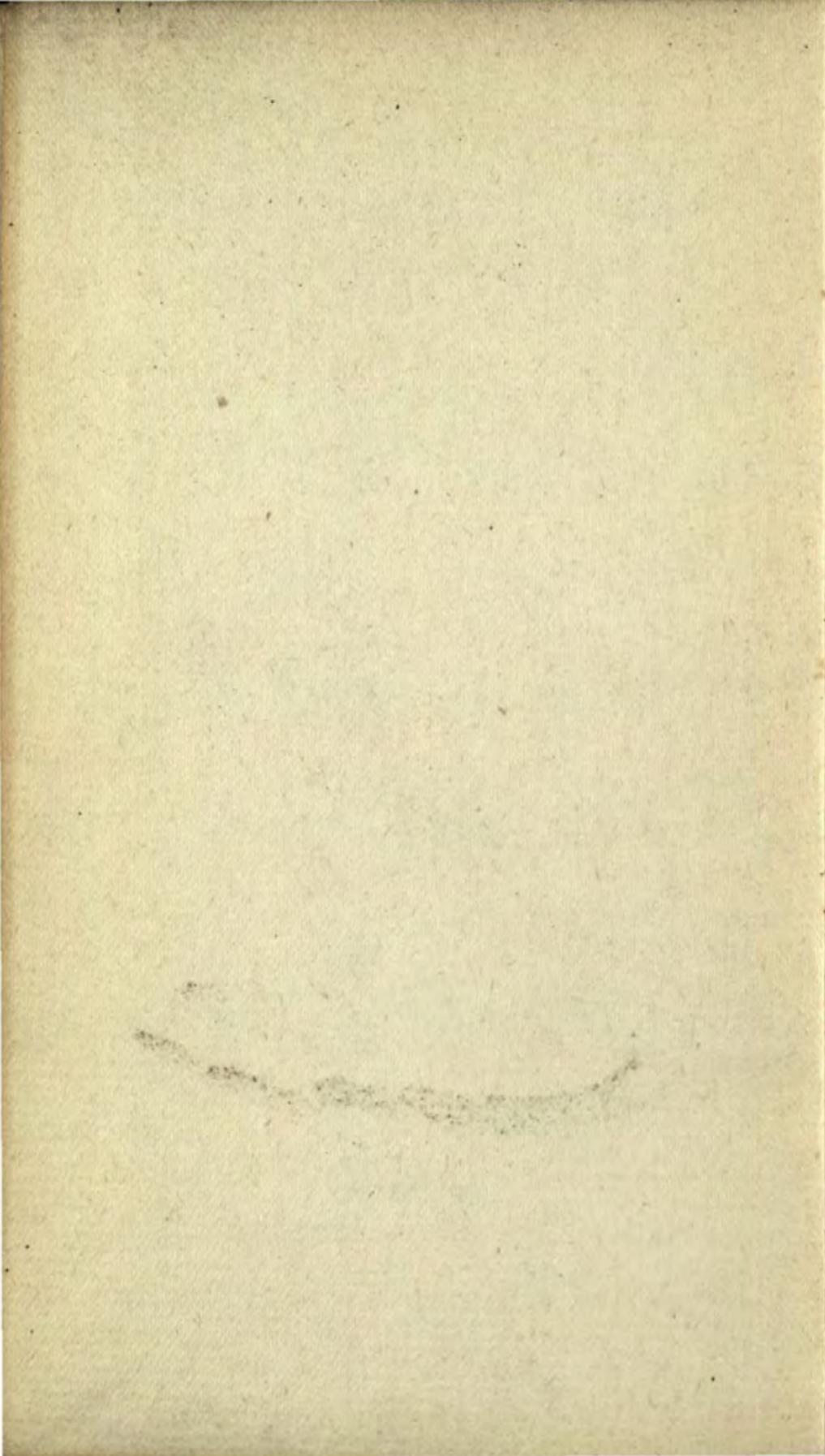
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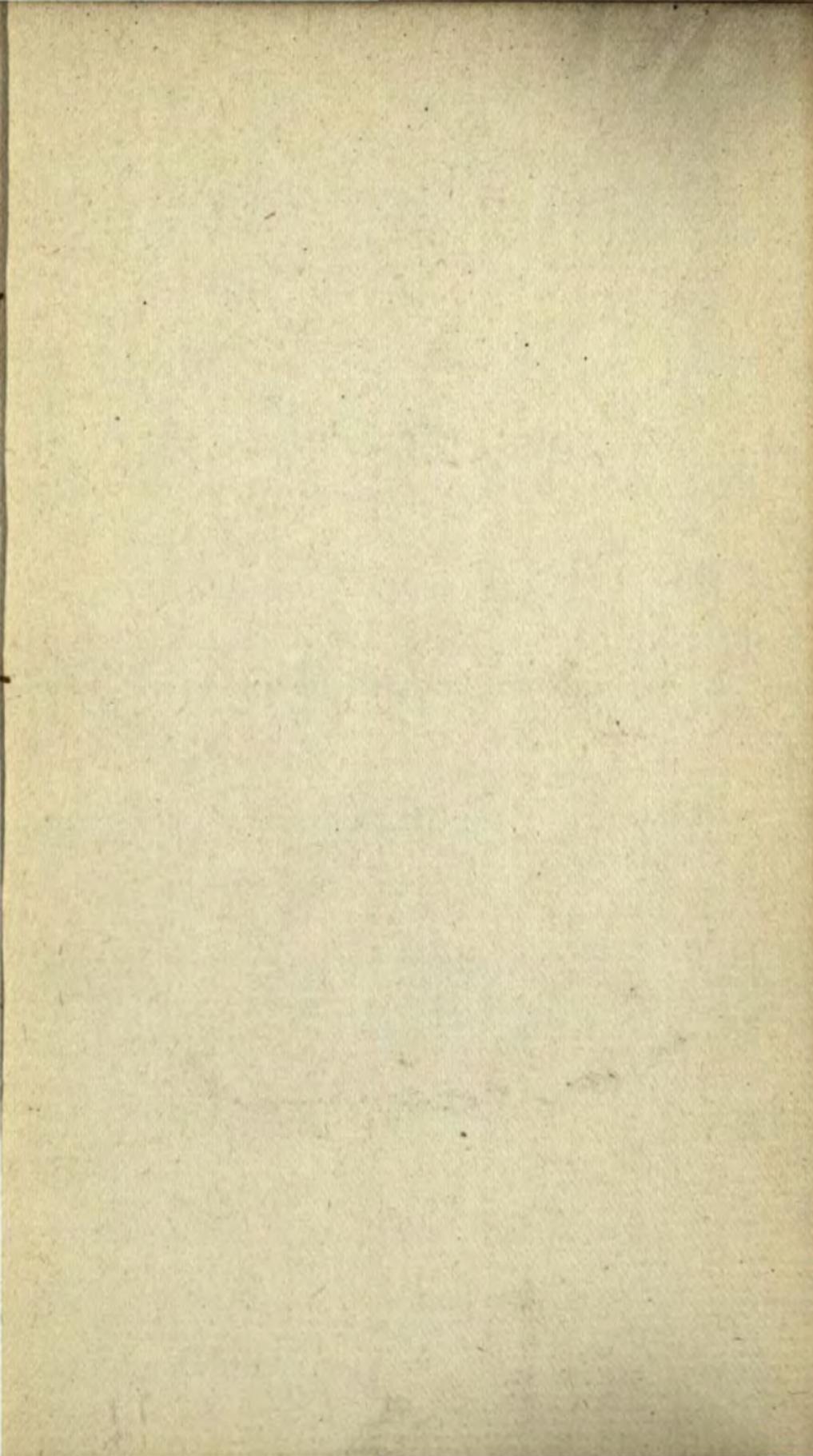
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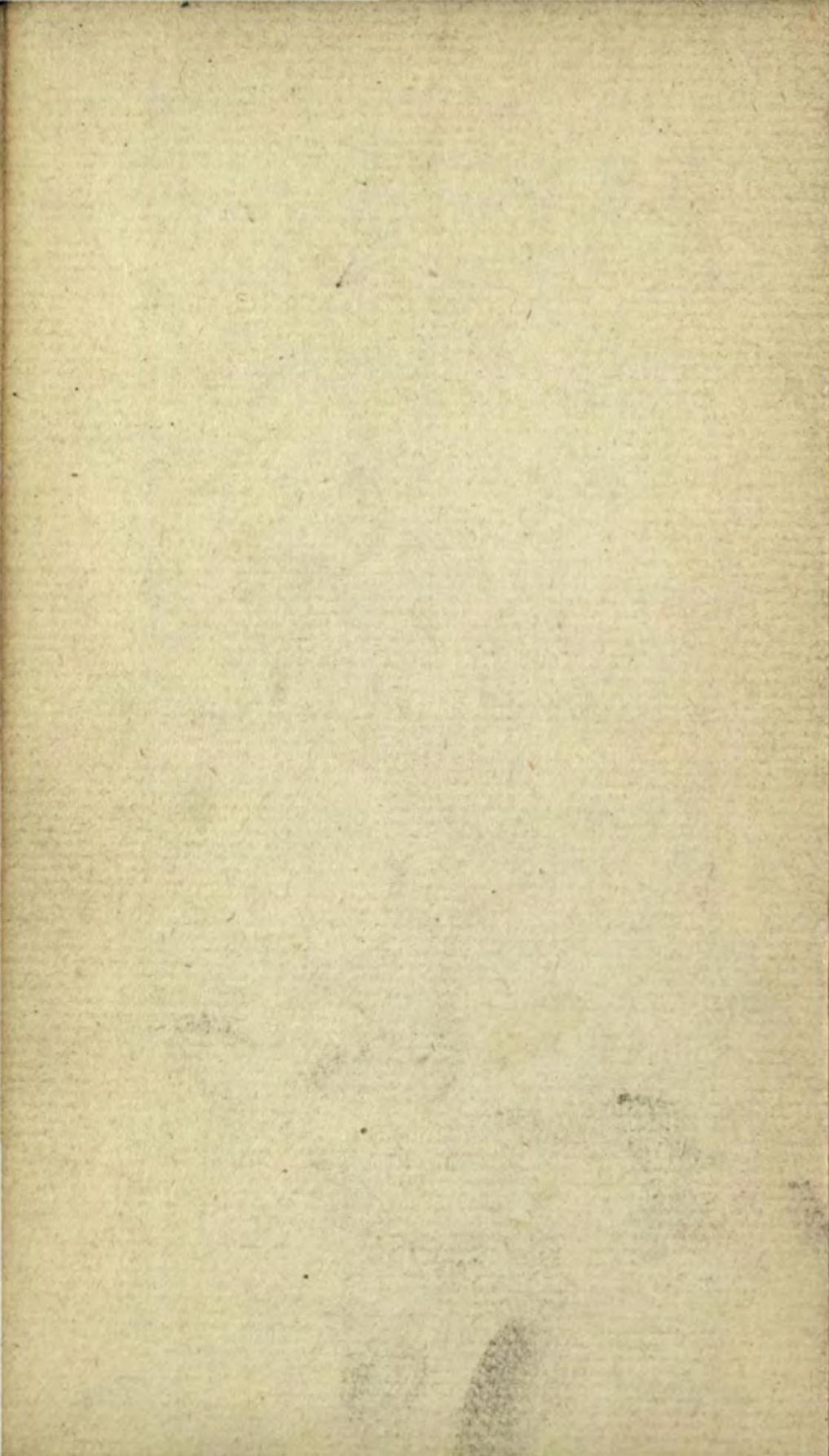
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THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE A



Fac-Simile Copy

OF THE ORIGINAL HISTORY OF THE

MORRISTOWN GHOST!

PUBLISHED IN 1792.

With Appendix Compiled from the County Records.

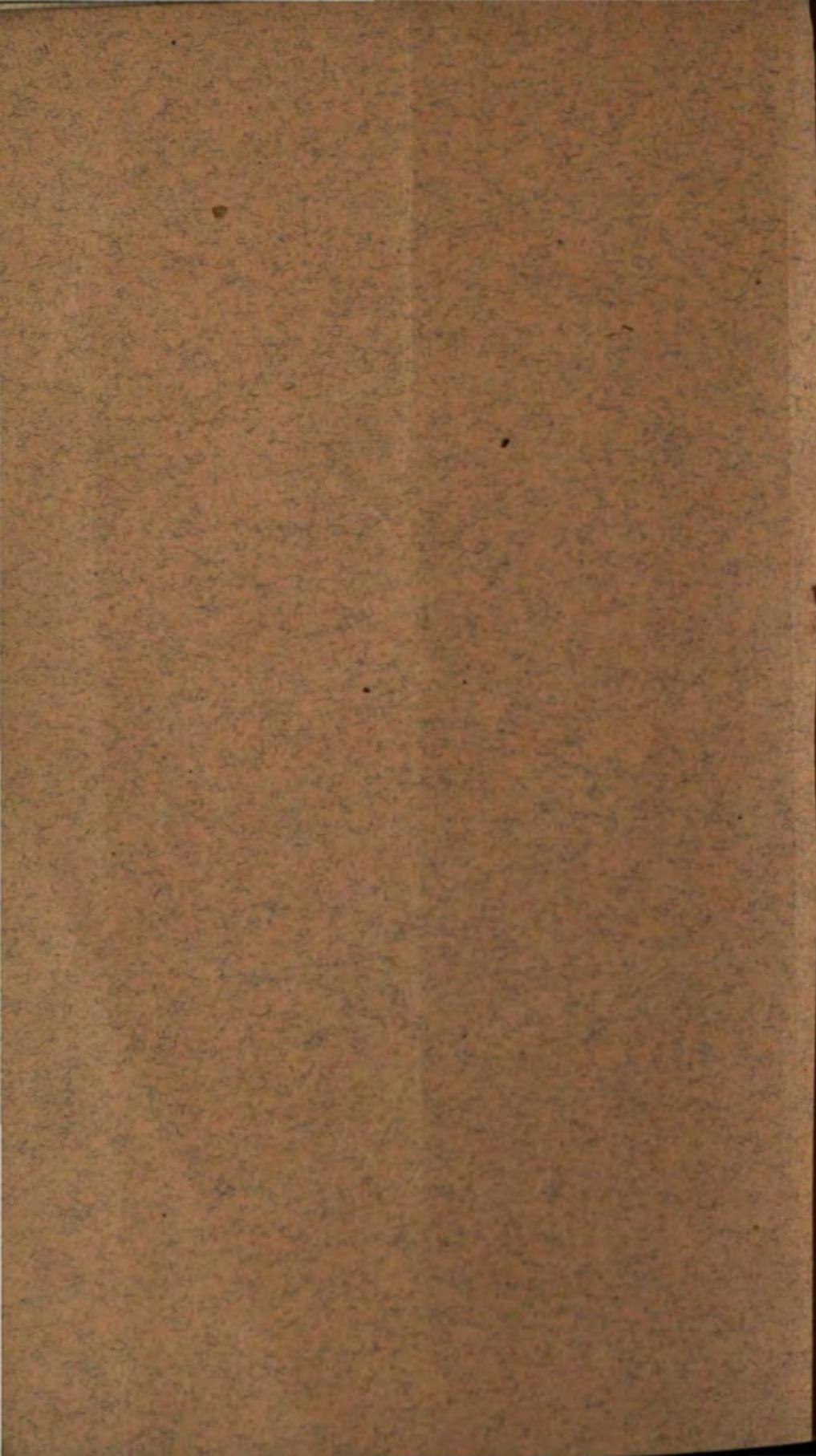
REPRODUCED AND FOR SALE BY

L. A. VOGT, "Banner" Office, Morristown, N. J.

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PRICE ONE DOLLAR.

1876.



PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

The publishers desire to state to the public that the following pages are an exact imitation, in size of pages, style of type, and quality of paper, of the original "Morristown Ghost" book printed in 1792. It contains more reading matter than the edition published by David Young in 1826, and is, of course, reliable. The principal difficulty met with in placing this work before the public, is its limited sale, confined as it is almost entirely to this County. A very cheap edition is therefore an impossibility, unless undertaken as a "labor of love."

The simple cost of publishing the Book is by no means the only expense entailed in placing it before you. We, in common with scores of the citizens of Morris County, have for years been searching for an original copy of the "Morristown Ghost," the traditions of which we have heard for years. As time passed and it became more and more evident that the whole edition had been destroyed we grew more earnest in our hunt for the original Ghost, and spent a great deal of time and considerable amount of money in the (until lately) fruitless search.

We frequently heard of persons who held copies of the book but on application to them the "Ghost" was invariably one of the "David Youngs" edition of 1826, and not the original, which we at last came to look upon as a veritable *ignis-fatuus*.

However after a most persistent search we at last present a *fac-simile* of the first Morristown Ghost. In its mission as an educator it has not "survived its usefulness" if those who even at this day take stock in the spiritualistic theories of the modern Ransford Rogers will, in following the mad freaks of the victim of the Morristown Ghost "put yourself in his place."

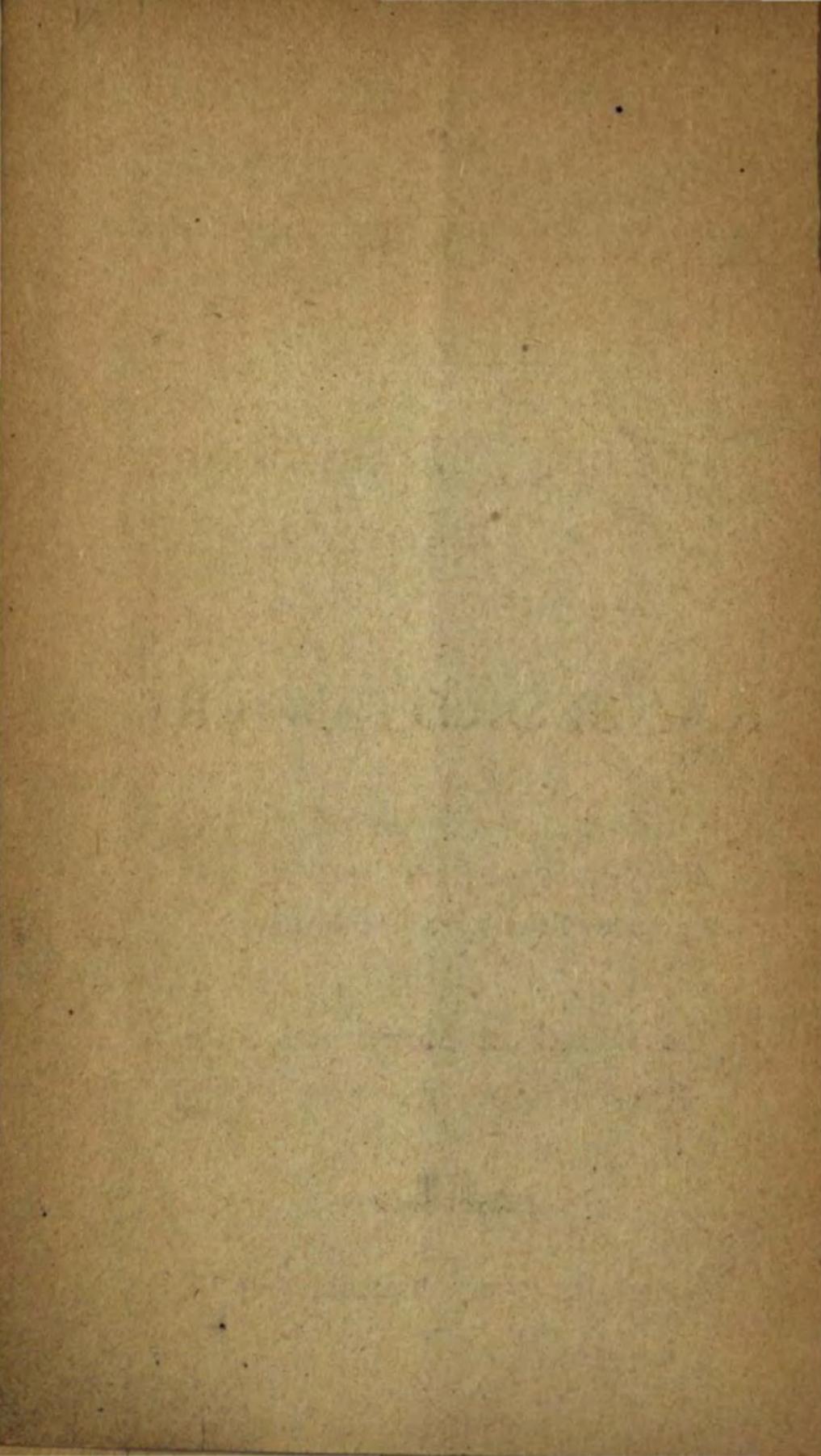
May 15th, 1876.

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THE
MORRIS-TOWN
GHOST.





A N



A C C O U N T

O F T H E

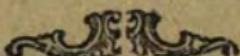
Beginning, Transactions
and Discovery,

O F

RANSFORD ROGERS

Who seduced many by pretended Hobgoblins and Apparitions, and thereby extorted Money from their pockets.

In the County of Morris and State of
New-Jersey, in the Year 1788.



Printed for every Purchaser—1792.

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P R E F A C E.

AM convinced, that it is impossible for one person to please all mankind, for there is such a variety of opinions predominant, that no one system or pamphlet will meet with universal approbation; but it appears to me requisite, that something of this kind should appear in public—and, as I have been solicited by numbers, to attempt a brief narration, with particulars, relating facts concerning many occurrences that happened in the county of Morris, and state of New Jersey, in the year 1788.—As I am convinced that many erroneous ideas have been propagated, therefore the generality of people are destitute of real facts—I am sensible that it is natural for men to censure each other with burlesque, and say, they had not sagacity adequate to discover the plot; but after an intrigue is discovered, every person that had not an active part in it, thinks his own sagacity would have been sufficient to discover the deception—but this we know, that only few men are ever satisfied, and when any curiosities are presented to them, they are zealous in the pursuit of knowledge, and anxious to know their terminations, and many will anticipate great gain, and contribute liberally until the fraud is detected; I shall therefore be as brief as possible, as it is my intention to eradicate many capricious notions from the minds of many who have imbibed witchcraft and the phenomena of hobgoblins.*

* It is evident, that legerdemain has been very conspicuous and prevalent even from the earliest periods of time, and many have been imposed upon by these deceivers; and credulous honest people have had ideas imbibed to that degree, concerning witchcraft and legerdemain, that they were deaf to philosophy—and reasoning was insufficient to eradicate those notions, until they were taught by the school-master of experience; and then, the compensation they received, was to regret the loss of their time and interest.

It is well known that many impositions have been inflicted upon mankind, by particular persons in every country; and in the earliest periods of time, many remarkable occurrences took place, that much surprised the greater part of mankind, induced them to believe that such wonderful phenomena could not take place, only by a supernatural power.

Every person that is acquainted with human nature, or has studied the disposition of mankind, must be fully convinced of the deception of man, and certainly know, there are persons, whose abilities, disposition and genius, are in every respect, adequate to the profession of deceivers. And many of their co-temporaries confide in their abilities, integrity and veracity, to that degree, that they will sacrifice their property, through ignorance, to support a vicious, ignoble, defrauder. Nor is this much to be wondered at, if we contemplate the avaricious disposition of men, who are ever in search of objects in futurity, especially such as have a tendency to produce gain, they will pursue with the greatest alacrity, anticipating joys which, upon a near approach, elude the grasp. It is obvious, that some illiterate persons have a genius adequate to prepossess themselves in favor with many, and by an enigmatical behaviour, induce some to form eminent opinions of their merit, at the same time it was paradoxical. And if we suppose that every generation grows wiser, we must believe that ignorance has been gradually extinguishing for some hundred years past; and it is almost incredible to believe that any impositions could be practised upon mankind at this enlightened period; but although knowledge is more diffuse, human nature is still the same, and Judas like, will perpetrate enormous deeds to satisfy an avaricious mind. And if we admit the same disposition to reign predominant, in the deceived, as the deceiver then let the deceived pay their money to the deceiver, who has been at trouble and cost in obtaining his art of extracting, for those who go to the school of experience may expect to pay dear for their tuition,



The Morris-Town Ghost

DELINEATED.

A DIABOLICAL intrigue invaded the county of Morris, in the state of *New Jersey*, in the year 1788. This unequalled performance, has taken vent and is promulgated throughout the continent, and deserves the attention of every person. But before I proceed any further, I think it requisite to advert a few minutes to the general character of that place.

It is very conspicuous that many of the people in that county, are much attached to machinations, and will spend much time in investigating curiosities. I don't say whether such a turn of mind is to be imputed to indigence or owing to the operation of the climate : this I submit to the candor of every person to determine within himself—it is obvious to all who are acquainted with the county of Morris, that the phenomena and capricious notions of witchcraft, has engaged the attention of many of its inhabitants for a number of years, and the existence of witches is adopted by the generality of the people.

I was once in Morristown, and happened to be in conversation with some gentlemen, who had, as it were, the faith of assurance in witchcraft. They informed me that there were several young women who were bewitched ; and they had been harassed so much by witches for a long time, and all their experiments proved abortive, and the young women were so much debilitated they were fearful they would never recover

their healths. They related feveral occurrences, that I think too fimple to mention ; but one inftance was, " That an old lady was churning, and being much fatigued, and unable to obtain butter, fhe at laft concluded that the witches were in the churn, and immediately had recourse to experiments, which were, that of heating feveral horfe-fhoes, and putting them into the churn alternately—fhe burnt the devil out and immediately obtained butter."

I perceived that the generality were apprehensive of witches riding them, and the greatest evidence of a witch was, if a woman had any deformity, or had lived to that age to caufe wrinkles in her face, fhe had the appellation of a witch. There was another occurrence that happened on Sunday. They informed me a man was driving his fheep from his grain, and an accident happened as they were jumping over a fence, one of the fheep broke its leg. The man for fome time before supposed that the fame fheep was bewitched.—About the fame time, an aged old lady returning from church, her horfe unfortunately ftumbled, fhe fell to the ground and broke her leg—This was received as an indication that fhe was a witch : And in fact, if a horfe had the belly-ache, or any beast was in agony of pain and behaved uncommon, the general opinion was, that the creature was bewitched.

It is my opinion, that perfons actuated by fuch capricious notions, are predisposed for the reception of marvelous curiofities whenever they occur.

I fhall now proceed to detail as near as poſſible, relative to the tranfactions of that phenomena, *Leger-demain* and *Hobgoblins* that happened in Morristown in the year 1788.

This tranfaction has occupied the attention of many & caufed great wondering through the ftafe, and every

perfon is eager to acquire a thorough knowledge of the real tranfactions ; and I hope this will have a tendency to eradicate fuch capricious notions from every rational mind.—The chief conductor of this deception, was *Ransford Rogers*, a native of Connecticut, in New-England. He was an illiterate perfon, but very affable, posfeſſed of a genius adequate to prepoſſefs himſelf into favor with many, and great facility to diſplay his abilities with the greatest brilliancy. He reſided in the ſtate of Maſſachuſetts for a number of years, and from thence to the ſtate of New York. His place of reſidence, before he came to New Jersey, was Smith's Clove, where he taught a ſchool. During his reſidence at Smith's Clove, two gentlemen from the county of Morris, who had been long in search and digging of mines, but had always proyed unſucceſſful for the want of a perfon whose knowledge descended into the bowels of the earth, and could reveal the ſecret things of darkneſs. There was alſo, a prevailing opinion, that there was money depoſited in the bowels of the earth, at Schooler's mountain, with an enchantment upon it—that it could not be obtained without a peculiar art in legerdemain, or to diſpel the hobgoblins & apparitions. Theſe gentlemen, in purſuit of a man that could work miracles, accidentally found Rogers, and after a fhort converſation, made known their buſineſs to him, and concluded that he was the man every way calculated to their wiſhes, for he was very fond of giving hints of his extenſive knowledge in every art and ſcience, but careful not to go fo far as to demonſtrate his propoſitions. He had a pretended copious knowledge in chemiftry ; and could raife or diſpel good or evil ſpirits. He then agreed with thoſe gentlemen to supply them with whatever was requeſted—This was a noble man indeed ! Now

Rogers, after gathering information from every quarter, and hearing the obstructions that debarred them from obtaining immense riches, was now satisfied this was the time for him to fulfil his former affections.

He then secured the veil of ignorance upon their heads, with an intention to extract money from their pockets; therefore after deliberation, he thought necessary to convene a number of gentlemen at a certain place in order to consult what method must be taken to obtain the above mentioned treasure. This meeting was the greatest secrecy, & their number about eight.

Here Rogers communicated to them the solemnity of the business and the intricacy of the undertaking, informing them there was an immense sum deposited at the above mentioned place; and there had been several persons murdered and buried with the money, in order to retain it in the earth. He likewise informed them, that those spirits must be raised and conversed with, before the money could be obtained. He likewise declared, that he could by his art and power, raise them apparitions, and the whole company might hear him converse with them, and satisfy themselves that there was no deception. This was received with belief and admiration by the whole company, without ever investigating whether it was probable or possible.—This meeting therefore, terminated with great assurance, they all being confident of the abilities, knowledge and power of Rogers.

By this time it appeared to those gentlemen, that the hidden treasures of darkness which had so long lay dormant in the earth, was to be obtained by the power of this mighty man!

Rogers informed them, that he should have interviews with the spirits; and as the apparitions knew

all things, they must be careful to walk circumfpectly, and refrain from all immorality, or they would f timulate the fpirits to withhold from them the treasures.

These gentlemen now under apprehenfions of vaft riches, began to propagate their intentions to particu-
lar friends, and there was fuch a prospect of being rich that many were anxious to become members ; and ad-
ditions were added unto it daily, of fuch as expected great riches. The company convened almoft every evening until their number increased to about forty. During this time, none had interviews with the fpirits except Rogers, and he communicated their converfa-
tion to the society, which was admitted as real facts.

Now you will obferve, that it is highly neceffary, that Rogers would have affociates, in order to facilitate his manoeuvres and avoid detection. During this time Rogers and his connections had recourse to fe-
veral experiments in compounding various substances, that being thrown into the air would break with fuch appearances as to indicate to the beholders to rife from a fupernatural power. He had compofitions of various kinds : Some by being buried in the earth for fo many hours, would break and caufe a great explo-
fion, which appeared difmal in the night and would caufe great timidity.

The company were all anxious to proceed and much elevated with fuch uncommon curiofities. A night was appointed for the whole company to convene and it happened to be a moft fevere ftempy night, but every man was punctual in his attendance. Some rode eight some twelve miles, when the inclemency of the weather was fufficient to extinguifh health.

At this interview they were all much aftronifhed with an unexpected interview with the fpirit, who related unto them the importance of their regular

proceedings, or they could not obtain their desire. The spirits informed them, that they must meet on such a night, at a certain place, about half a mile from any house in a field, retired from travelling and noise : and they must form certain angles and circles, and they must proceed in drawing their lines and forming their circles as Rogers directed, and then be careful to keep within the circles, or they would provoke the spirits to that degree, they would finally extirpate them from the place.

The night appointed for them to convene, being now arrived, they all with joy, fear and trembling, convened at the appointed house, about half a mile from the field. This field was environed on the north and west by a thick wood. The circles and angles being drawn the preceeding day, they all proceeded from the house about ten o'clock in the evening, with peculiar silence and decorum, and entered the circles with the greatest solemnity, and being fully sensible they were surrounded by apparitions and hobgoblins.

Upon one part of the circle was erected four posts, in order to spread a cloth, and form a tent, where Rogers could preside, as governor of the ghaſtly proceſſion. The number that entered these circles were about forty. This number was walking alternately during the whole proceſſion. It is not to be wondered at, if people were timorous in this place; for the candles illumining one part of the circle, caused a ghaſtly, melancholy, direful gloom, towards the woods, for it was a dark night. Every person must suppose that this is a fuitable place for the pretended ghosts to make their appearance and establish their faith in hobgoblins, apparitions, witch-craft and the devil.

After they had been rotating within the circles for

a confiderable time with great decorum, they were instantaneously, shocked with the most impetuous explosion from the earth at a small distance from them

— This substance was previously compounded & secreted in that place a few hours before. The flames rising at a confiderable height, illuminated the circumambient atmosphere, and presented many dreadful objects, from the supposed haunted grove, which was instantaneously involved in obscurity.

Immediately after the pretended ghosts made their appearance, with a hideous groan. They remained invisible to the company, but conversed with Rogers, in the hearing of the company—this was in Nov. 1788. The spirits informed them, that they had possessions of vast treasure, and could not give them up unless they proceed regular, and without variance; and as fortune had discriminated them to receive the treasure, they must deliver to the spirits, every man, twelve pounds, for the money could not be given up by the spirits until that sum was given to them. They must also acknowledge Rogers as their conductor, and adhere to his precepts, & as they knew all things, they would detect the man that attempted to defraud his neighbor. These pretended ghosts had a machine over their mouths, that caused such a variation in their voices, that they were not discovered by any of the company during the procession, which lasted until about three o'clock in the morning.

Now the whole company confide in Rogers and look to him for protection to defend them from the raging spirits; and after several ceremonies Rogers dispelled the apparitions, and they all returned from the field wondering at the miraculous things that happened, being fully persuaded of the existence of hobgoblins and apparitions—By this time they could revere

Rogers, and thought him something more than man.

Thus far, every project terminated agreeable to his wish ; and he had such influence over them, with a despotic power, that it is my opinion, had he put one of them to death, he would have been justified and defended by the rest.

After this conference was over, and all agreed to deliver the apparitions twelve pounds, as soon as possible, Rogers, perceiving that every man was not under circumstances to give twelve pounds, his generosity therefore induced him to reduce the sum to six pounds, and those who were not able to produce that to give four pounds.

Rogers to confirm them in the faith, pretended to have nocturnal interviews with the spirits, and communicated to the society, therefore, they convened some of them almost every night, and as fast as they could get the money, they would convene and deliver it to the spirits ; and whenever they met in a secret room, the door and window shutters being made fast, and Rogers communicating his interviews to the company, unusual noises would be heard about the house, that would cause great timidity. Groanings, and wrapping upon the house, the falling of boards in the chamber, the jingling of money at the window, and a voice speaking, " Press forward !" The superficial machine that was over the mouth of him who spoke, so much altered his voice, that no one could detect him.

The spirits declared that they were sent to deliver that society great riches, and they could have no rest until they had given it up ; but the money they requested, was only an acknowledgement for such immense treasures. Methinks I hear every man anticipating future greatness, but I expect time will defeat the enterprise.

There was now a sort of emulation among them, who shoud firft deliver the money to the fpirits, but fome of them was weak in faith, which caufed animo-
fities and disputes among them ; and meetings were called almost every night during the winter. The reader will obferve one circumstance in particular, that occasioned the bufiness to continue through the winter, which was, the money that the fpirits requefted, muſt be filver or gold, and the current money then in Jerfey, was loan paper : This money did not circulate only in that fstate, and no perfon would take it in lieu of filver and gold, only at one quarter diſcount. This therefore had a tendency to continue the buſi-
ness thro' the winter, as it was almost impoffible for fome of them to get filver or gold ; but all of them were very induſtrious feeking the fum required. They would give almost any diſcount or intereft that any man pleased to ask. They would mortgage their farms and diſpoſe of their cattle at half price, rather than fail in obtaining the required fum.

It is very obvious why Rogers and his affociates, the fuppoſed fpirits, requefted filver or gold, for they wanted to carry it out of the fstate, and paper money would have been of but little fervice.

Sometime in March, the money being chiefly de-
poſited in the hands of the fpirits, Rogers fearing that something might happen, pretended to have nocturnal interviews with the fpirit, likewife feveral perſons, eſpecially thoſe who had the moft faith and men of veracity were called out of their beds in the night by the fpirits, and directed how to proceed.

These gentlemen immediately made known to the company their interviews with the fpirit ; and when the company were convened into a private room, the pretended fpirits were outſide of the houſe, groaning,

gingling of money, telling them to have faith, be of good cheer, and keep secrect all transactions, and in May next they shoule receive the treasure.—This was in March 1789. They all returned with joy, fear and wondering, being very liberal, waiting impatiently for May to come.

Now Rogers and his affociates have received the greater part of the money, and they are full of machinations, how shall postpone the busines the next meeting, for all expected to proceed to Schooler's Mountain the next May, and receive the treasure.

The night appointed being now arrived, they all convened in a large circle in an open field, waiting for the ghofts to appear and give them farther directions and proceed with them to the place where the money was deposited. Immediately the ghofts appeared without the circle, with great choler, and hedious groanings, wreathing them selves in various positions, that appeared most ghastly in the night—then upbraiding the company declaring they had not proceeded regular, and some of them was faithlefs, and had divulged many things that ought to have been kept secrect: and by their wicked dispositions and unimovities that had taken place among them, debarred them at present, from obtaining the treasure. The pretended ghofts, raging to that degree at the miscon-
duct of the company, that Rogers, who appeared or pretended to be very much frightened with the rest, with all his art and pleading was scarcely able to pacify the raging ghofts !

At this the company confiding in Rogers, looked to him for protection. The ghofts informed them, they muft wait patiently, until some future period. They were now so much intimidated, that they thought but little about money; at length Rogers, after a va-

riety of ceremonies by his art and power, dispelled the frightful apparitions, and tranquility, once more, resides within the circle.

They now returned from the circle, still retaining their belief, revering and adhering to Rogers in all things. Thus far they have been seduced. They have given their money to Rogers and his associates, instead of apparitions, and are waiting for the spirit to return and lead them to anticipated fortunes.

Had Rogers now halted, and not proceeded upon another project, he would have been feared and respected; & the capricious notions of witchcraft, hobgoblins, and the devil would have prevailed among them, with prejudice, fear and ignorance, until this day. But this diabolical intrigue and the succeeding one, has diffused light, and eradicated ignorance from the minds of many. This scene ended the first of May, 1789.

It is evident that Rogers did not intend to proceed any farther upon such diabolical intrigues; but sometime in the fall preceding the termination of the first scene, two young men from New England, took up their abode in the county of Morris; Some time the fore part of the winter, one of them took up his abode in Morris. Rogers at that time taught a school three miles out of town, but soon quitting his school there removed to Morristown. These young men soon became very intimate with Rogers, which was the cause of another diabolical intrigue, although their behavior was circumspect—Sometime in April these young men left Morristown, and removed about twenty miles, but still continuing a correspondence with Rogers, by letters and frequent visits.

Although these two men were removed at the distance of twenty miles from Rogers, it was a favor-

able opportunity for them to gain profylites : as it is evident they seduced many, and some of eminent characters, that would have joined the company and proceeded in anticipating great riches, but Rogers thought it not proper to admit them, as appeared from the corresponding letters with Rogers and the fire club.

I before mentioned, that the busness of the former company terminated the first of May, and as Rogers and his former affociates have succeeded so well, in extracting money with new inventions, that Rogers again undertakes, with great alacrity upon a new project.

A company now convene, that consists only of five. They proceed upon various manoeuvres, rotating the room in order to raise the spirits, while they were performing many ceremonies, various noises were heard around the house : The rattling of a wagon—groaning,—striking upon the windows, &c. Then each one taking a sheet of paper, extending his arm, holding the paper out at the door, waiting for the spirit to write upon one of the papers, how they should proceed ! After waiting some time, each one folding his paper, proceeding regular around a table, then opening their papers on one of them was a writing, directing them to convene upon such a night, and the spirit would give further directions how they must proceed. Previous to this Rogers had prepared the writing, but wanted more time for consideration ; therefore they were dismissed with orders to convene on such a night.

The night arrived—they convened at Roger's house in order to receive information from the spirit, that Rogers and one of the affociates pretended they had interviews with.

After they had all convened, the first manœuvre was, both the deceiver and the deceived unite in prayer upon their bended knees; then parading according to their age proceed rotating the room, as many times as there were persons in number; then parading round a table, each one drawing a sheet of paper from a quire and Rogers folding them, delivered to each man one; then they proceeding, in order, a small distance from the house, and drawing a circle, about twelve feet diameter, they all stepped within it, unfolding their papers, extending them with one arm, fell with their faces to the earth, continuing in prayer with their eyes closed, that the spirit might enter within the circle, and write their directions upon the papers; then Rogers giving the word "*Amen!*" prayer ended, and each one folded his paper—rose, and marched into the house; then unfolding their papers, the writing appeared upon one of them, to the great astonishment of most of the company.

This writing was to be kept safe in the hands of one of the associates, to exhibit when occasion called in order to gain profylites, relating to the mysteries of the paper. The contents of the paper was, that the company must be increased to eleven members, and each one must deposit to the spirit the sum of twelve pounds, silver or gold. This writing Rogers and his associates prepared previous to this time, therefore the meeting was dismissed, and each one exerted his influence to gain profylites.

Rogers and his associates now finding the minds of many flexible, resolved to proceed upon some new project, that might have a tendency to prove more lucrative. Rogers therefore, wrapping himself up in a sheet, went to the house of a certain gentleman in

the night and called him up, by wrapping at the doors and windows, and conversed with him in such disguise that the gentleman thought he was a spirit. The pretended spirit relating to him, that he had vast treasures in his possession, and a company was in pursuit of it, and he could not give it up unless some of the members of the church joined them, such as I shall mention : for said he, *I am the spirit of a just man, and am first to give you information how to proceed, and put the conducting of it into your hands ; and I will be ever with you and give you directions when you go amiss ; therefore fear not, but go to Rogers and inform him of your interview with me—Fear not, I am ever with you !*

This gentleman, not apprehending any deception, believed it to be a spirit. Early in the morning he went to see Rogers, and found everything that the spirit related to be fact ; he therefore was convinced, that it was from a supernatural power.

He then went to inform those members belonging to the church, as the spirit had directed him. He found them very flexible—giving great heed to his declaration, and anxious to see curiosities. But whether these church members were induced by self motives, or by a zeal to help their fellow creatures I do not say ; but the plan that Rogers and his associates had in view, is very obvious, for this could not be obtained only under a cloak of religion. After this none were admitted to join the company only those of a truly moral character, either belonging to the church or abstaining from profane company, and walking circumspectly. This was in June, 1789.

The company now increased daily of aged, abstemious, honest, judicious, simple church members.—It is now in a religious line ; and Rogers having put it

into the hands of another to conduct, he and his associates were busy every night, in disguise, appearing to particular persons, especially those who were most weak in faith, calling them up in the night, and ordering them to *Pray without ceasing*, for they were just spirits sent unto them to inform them, that they should have great possessions if they would persevere in faith.

Rogers and his associates, under the title of spirits, had ordered the conductor, that the company must consist of thirty-seven members ; and every member must deposit into the hands of the spirit, twelve pounds silver or gold.—The company now convened, about twenty in number, the spirit had ordered the conductor to proceed in certain manœuvres, in order to obtain directions from the spirit, that would be satisfactory to every member, for some were deficient in faith. Rogers and some of the associates always convened with the rest, wondering at such marvelous things.—This was policy that they might not be suspected.

While they were fitting in the room, several noises were heard around the house ; groaning, wrapping at the windows, gingling of money, &c. The spirit then spoke these words, "LOOK TO GOD !" They all were amazed at such things, and Rogers with the rest wondered ! They fell upon their knees to pray ; and after this ceremony was past, all arose and walked alternately around the room, five times ; then parading around a table, and each man drawing a sheet of paper from a quire, it was folded up, and all huddled together, and each man taking one, and tying a white handkerchief round his head and loins, they all marched with great decorum into a meadow about one hundred yards from the house. Previous to this,

Rogers having prepared a writing, and when going to the meadow, he put the blank paper into his pocket, and took the writing out, unnoticed by any of the company. After they arrived in the meadow at the appointed place, they rotated a circle five times, about thirty feet diameter,—then they all stepped within the circle, and unfolding their papers, they all fell with their faces to the earth, with one arm extended, holding the paper, that the spirit might enter within the circle and write upon one of their papers, how they must proceed. They were ordered not to look up, upon their perils, but to continue fervent in prayer. In about ten minutes the commander gave the word, "*Amen!*" They all rose, and folding their papers, they were hustled together; then each man drawing one, they marched alternately from the place into the house, with great decorum.—they all parading around a large table, the next thing was to see if the spirit had given them any directions how to proceed; then each one unfolding his paper, the writing exhibited plain on one of their papers in a most curious manner. This writing was so elegant, that they were much astonished, thinking it a miracle, or supposing that the spirit entered the circle and wrote the contents, while they were on their faces at prayer.

The contents of the writing was, *O faithful man! What more need I exhibit unto you! I am the spirit of a just man, sent from Heaven to declare these things unto you; and I can have no rest until I have delivered great possessions into your hands; but look to GOD, there is greater treasure in Heaven for you! O faithless men! Press forward in faith, and the prize is yours!* It also mentioned various chapters in the Bible, that the members must peruse, and particular psalms for them to sing; and the company must consist of thirty-few-

en members; and each man muſt deposit into the hands of the ſpirit according to his circumftances, not exceeding twelve, nor leſs than fix pounds; and the money muſt be given up as soon as poſſible, in order to relieve the ſpirit from his exigencies, that he might return from whence he came.

Rogers and two of his affociates were preſent and appeared to be aſtoniſhed with the reſt, but were not ſuſpected by any of the company.

They all agreed, that as faſt as any of them could get the money, it ſhould be given to the ſpirit; but they muſt meet at ſuſh a place, and give it up in a legal manner. A few days after this about twelve members convened, but only feven had the money ready to appropriate unto the ſpirit.

The manner of their proceeding was, they convened in a room, and after feveral ceremonies and prayer being ended, they arofe, & rotaſed the room, alternately, feveral times; then went with the greateſt decorum, into a meadow, about one hundred yards from the houſe and drawing a circle about twenty feet diameter, they ſtepped within it, waiting for the ſpirit to make its appearance.

After a fhort time, the ſpirit whiſtling at the diſtance of about fifty yards from the circle, the commander then left the company and went to conveſe with the ſpirit; he ſoon returned with orders from the ſpirit, that all thoſe who had the money, ſhould retire to a certain tree, about forty yards from the circle. Now thoſe who had the money went with the commander to the tree. The ſpirit appeared about twenty yards diſtant from the tree, with a ſheet around him, jumping and ftamping repeating theſe words, "*Look to GOD!*" Thoſe that stood by the tree made a fhort complicated prayer, and laying the

money at the root of the tree for the fpirit to receive they retired to the company. They all returned to the houfe, obferving the greateft order, trembling at every noife and gazing in every direction; fuppoſing they were furrounded by hobgoblins, apparitions, witches and the devil. Rogers and two of his affociates pretended to give up the money which was only blank paper.

This pretended fpirit was one of the affociates with a white fheet around him, and a machine over his mouth that his voice might not be detected by any that knew him; and immediately after the fpirit had depofited his money, this fpirit takes it to himfelf, which was about forty pounds.

Previous to this Rogers pulverized fome bones and had given it to the commander, declaring that it was the duft of their bodies, and each man muft have fome of this powder in a paper fealed, as a token of the fpirits approbation, & that he was one of the company. This powder was to be kept fecret, and no one to touch it upon his peril. A fufficient quantity of liquor was alfo prepared, which the fpirit had ordered to be ufed very freely; then each one taking a hearty dram, they all united in fervent prayer, after which the meeting was concluded.

It is very obvious that fpirituous liquors when taken in large quantities, will augment the ideas of men and induce them to anticipate profit and pleafure, al- though they are inacceſſible in futurity.—Some of the members cauſed great difturbance, by their diving, inadvertantly, to exceſs in that powerful ftimulus, but it is fomething pleafing to fee aged, sober, abfteminous men with their ideas raiſed, put on cheerfulness and vivacity.

Thus they proceeded as above mentioned, in giv-

ing their money to the spirit every few evenings.— The fpirits brought to the commander feveral curiofities, that were to be exhibited to the company in order to confirm their faith, but were to be delivered to the fpirits whenever they call for them.

Various ceremonies were performed, that I fhall omit as they are too fimple to mention, but every means were taken in order to make the members ufe liquor freely, the fpirit gave unto the commander a compounded mafs that was to be made into pills, and each one to take a pill at every meeting, and except he ufed very freely of liquor it would operate in making his mouth and lips fwell; Thus they caufed fome to drink to excets, through fear, although they before obferved the greatest temperance, and in fact fome drank to that degree, to obviate the effects of the pill, that they were almoft incapable of navigating in the night.

Thus the company had increased to about thirty-seven in number; and the greater part had given the money to the fpirits and circumftances prevented or delayed the reft from doing it, although every one was as brief as poſſible and fpaird no pains to procure the money.

The company were now all engaged being much augmented with the propect of being rich and soon expected to reap the harveſt with pleafure, and receive their anticipated gain; but an accident now occurs, that terminates in the diſcovery of the plot, which is this: One of the aged members that had one of theſe papers, fuppoſed to contain fome of the duft of the body of the fpirits, as I before mentioned, was to be kept ſecret and no one to touch it. This man leaving it accidenſtly in his pocket in the houſe, his wife happened to find it, broke it open and perceiving

the contents, feared to touch it supposing it to be withcraft: She went immediately to the priest for advice—He, not knowing its composition was unwilling to touch it for fear it might have some operation upon him.

When her husband discovered what she had done, he was much terrified, declaring that she had ruined him forever, in breaking open that paper. This made her more solicitous to know the contents; and she declaring not to divulge anything, he told her the whole of their proceedings; she insisted on it, they were serving the devil, and thought it her duty to put an end to such proceedings. This made great disturbance in the company, and Rogers and his associates were in disguise every night, appearing to particular persons as spirits, in order to confirm them in the faith and prevent a discovery.—At last one evening Rogers having drank too much of the good creature, taking a sheet with him rode to a house of a certain gentleman in order to converse with him as a spirit; but making many blunders the woman thought it was a man, but after conversing with him some time, and going to prayer, Rogers departed declaring that he was the spirit of a just man.

In the morning as soon as it was light, the man went out where the spirit appeared, and as there had been a heavy dew that night, he perceived the tracks of a man, and following him to the fence where he perceived a horse had been tied; he then tracking the horse to the door where Rogers lived,—But as Rogers was not within, he followed the same track to the house of a certain gentleman, about half a mile distant, where he found Rogers; and as the gentleman of the house had, the evening before, lent Rogers a horse, together with many other circum-

ftances, sufficient to convict him. The authority was then consulted, and judging him culpable, he was immediately apprehended and committed to pris'on.

This detection greatly alarmed the whole company as they were unwilling to believe that Rogers was the spirit, even when the cleareft evidence demonstrated that he *must have been* the ghoft in question—but Rogers declaring his innocence, was in a few days bailed out, by a gentleman that I shall call by the name of Compaffion, and to this gentleman Rogers ought to ever pay a debt of gratitude and benevolence.

After Rogers was clear of the jail, he perceived he was among his enemies, he therefore made his flight, but being pursued and apprehended the second time, he confessed his faults, and owned that for his conduct and the exprefſions he had uſed in his projects, he deserved punishment; but fortune favored him, and he once more eluded their hands.

Now many threatenings and horrid imprecations proceeded from many after this man, who only a few days before, they revered and thought him a superior being.

The caufe of theſe imprecations being caſt after him is very obvious, that is while he continued with them in parables, working miracles, he promised them great riches, but now he is gone, their hopes are all eradicated. But ought not the county of Morris to perpetuate and honor the name of Rogers for eradicating ignorance and cauſing the light of reaſon to illume the minds of many, where obſcurity had reigned for many years?

There have been various reports propagated concerning the fum that Rogers and his affociates obtained from the believers of witchcraft, but the whole

amount was about five hundred pounds. But after Rogers had taken the veil from their eyes, and extracted money from their pockets, they were unwilling that he should have any compensation, but insisted that he should be brought to condign punishment, therefore Rogers is detected in his knavery, and his associates are unknown to the world; but had Rogers persevered, and avoided detection until all had given in their money, he would have left them in ignorance, waiting with patience for the return of the spirit, as was the case with the former company; but his being detected, and confession demonstrated to every person that there was neither witchcraft nor blackart in any of his performances, which they thought to proceed from supernatural power. I am confident that this occurrence is sufficient to extirpate all capricious notions of witchcraft, wizzards, hobgoblins, apparitions and frightful imaginations, from the minds of rational beings.

I am confident that there are many such kinds of impositions transacted by particular persons, and many illiterate and vulgar readily believe that they have power sufficient to call into being the souls of those dead bodies that have long slept dormant in the earth: But let reason be our guide, and we shall soon exclaim against such capricious declarations—But one half of the world will not investigate whether these things are either probable or possible, but proceed with alacrity upon the affirmation of others. Again, there are some, that are as destitute of honesty as the devil is of holiness, and will persevere in hopes of gain, and will grasp at every opportunity to take advantage, but when they are outwitted, they will exclaim against knavery and plead innocence.

It is obvious to every person that it is among the

moft vulgar and illiterate part of the world, where the capricious notions of witchcraft and hobgoblins reſide. But in thoſe parts of the world where learning and ſcience prevail, every idea or pretenſion towards raifing demons are excluded. The Laplanders the moft ignorant beings on earth pretend to work miracles, raife demons, and predict future events, and many with weak intellects and tremulous, readily adhere to their fantatical declaration; but nature is uniform in her courſe, and deviates not, and when ſuſh wonderful phenomenon preſents, as I have been treating of, we may reaſonably expect that is the production and craft of vicious perſons, to ſupport their indolence. But the flexibility and readineſs of man, to adhere to capricious declarations, when intereſts occurs, is very obvious, and impoſitions only proceed from a want of fagacity and deliberation, to inveſti-
gate whether ſuſh propoſitions are compatible with philoſophy or the courſe of nature.

In the above mentioned occurrence, many eminent characters, poſſeſſed of moరality and veracity, had the miſfortune to be led captive in purſuit of anticipated riches, conducted by an inferior who was as deſtitute of honeſty as Lucifer of holineſs. But the propects of wealth are often fo enchanting as to ex-
clude wiſdom from the wife and diſcernment from the moft fagacious.

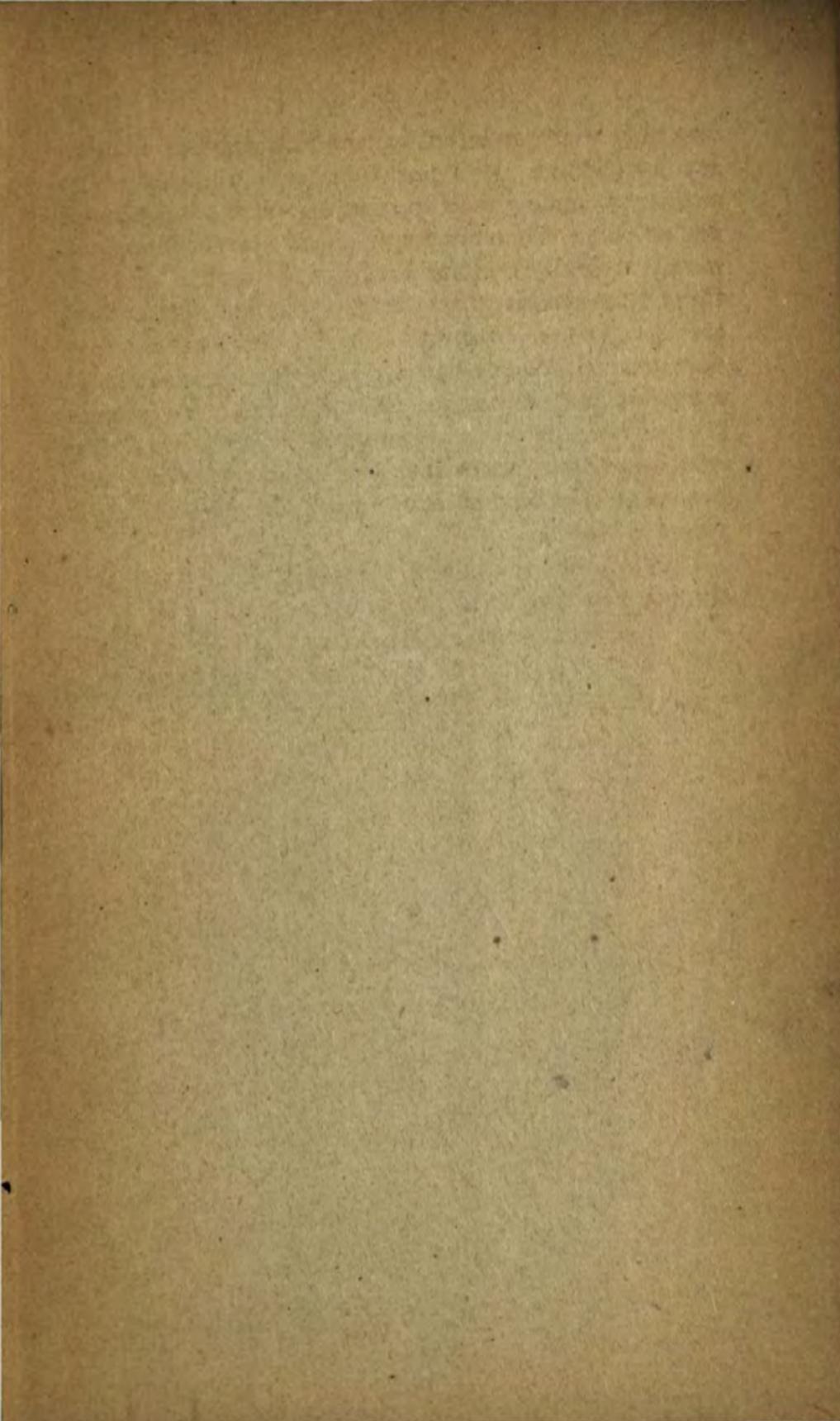
In the foregoing treatife, I have mentioned only the moft eminent circumſtances, accompanied with facts, as I thought it needless to advert to the more minute proceedings, for ſome of them were too ſimple to be exhibited to a continent where arts and ſciences reſide. But if it ſhould be thought requiſite, and would entertain the curious or illume the ſimple, with pleasure I would detail every particular manœu-

vre, that was tranfacted by the followers of imaginary hobgoblins. It is not from malevolence, or any antipathy, againt any perfon or place, that induced me to write the above mentioned tranfactions, but purely to enlighten the minds of the simple, and free them from the imaginary fear of witches, apparitions and hobgoblins which do not exift. And as this relation proceeds from one that wifhes happineſs to all mankind, and the author, although unknown, hopes that no one perfon or perſons will be offended at the relation of facts, when there are no names mentioned; providing they had an active part with the anticipating fire-club.

This Pamphlet is chiefly intended for the perufal of the good economif ts in Morris County.

Gentlemen, yours in amity,

PHILANTHROPIST.



APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

The papers and records of the Clerk's office, in relation to the indictments of Ransford Rogers give no detailed account of the suits. The reasons are that Rogers escaped by forfeiting his bail and the suits never having come off the documentary evidence was not placed on the records.

The only minutes to be discovered on this head is in the March term of Court 1789, when Rogers was indicted for fraud and conspiracy. Benjamin Freeman went his bail in the sum of £50, and as Rogers ran away Freeman was mulcted in this amount.

The records in speaking of the case as opened in Court says "Rogers being called did not appear and the said Benjamin Freeman being called to bring forth the body of the said Ransford Rogers the Court granted him until the first day of next (July) term, and ordered that the recognizance be not estreated.

In the July Term "Benjamin Freeman not having brought in the body of the said Ransford Rogers, agreeably to the rule of the last term, it is ordered that his recognizance be estreated, on motion of Russell for the State," in the sum of £50.

[The Freeman who was thus probably the last man in this section defrauded by Rogers, was a hotel-keeper, and the records state that he was himself afterward indicted for assault and battery, and a little later for horse racing.]

From the minutes of the Morris Common Pleas in our Clerk's office it appears that in the December term of 1789 an attachment was issued at the suit of Jonathan Hathaway against Ransford Rogers for £200.

The writ is as follows:

MORRIS COUNTY. ss. The State of New Jersey to our Sheriff of our County of Morris, *Greeting*: We command you to attach Ransford Rogers by all his goods and chattels, lands and tenements, in your bailiwick, so that you have his body before the Judges of our Inferior Court of Common Pleas to be held at Morristown in and for the County of Morris on the third Tuesday in December next, to answer unto Jonathan Hathaway of a plea of debt to the value of two hundred pounds, proclamation money, which to him he owes and from him unjustly detains as is said. And have you then there this writ. Witness, Samuel Tuthill, Esq., Judge of our said Court at Morristown aforesaid, the twenty-fifth day of September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine.

C. RUSSELL, Clerk.

In December 1789, the Sheriff, by virtue of the

foregoing writ of attachment issued against the property of Rogers, made the following return which we give verbatim :

" In obedience to this attachment to me directed I have attached the defendant by all his goods and chattels, rights and credits that I could find in my bailiwick, viz : one cow in the possession of Joseph Rogers which he saith he has hired of the Defendant for three years from August last, was one year (as is said), and one hat said to be castor."

At the same time another writ was issued by same plaintiff against Joseph Rogers, garnishee of Ransford. To this writ Benj. Freeman was also returned as bail.

At the same term the first default of defendant was entered in the suit of Hathaway against Ransford Rogers, and Hiram Smith, Joseph Lewis and Moses Estey, were appointed auditors, "to audit as well the demands of the plaintiff as of such others as should apply to them."

At the next or March term Jonathan Hathaway appears as a judgment debtor, and has his oxen, cows, and young cattle levied on to satisfy his debt to Abraham Ogden, probably a result of his investment with Mr. Rogers.

At the July Term, 1790, the auditors reported and judgment was entered as follows :

" We, the subscribers, auditors appointed on this suit to audit and adjust the demands as well of the

Plaintiff as of all others, the creditors of the said Ransford Rogers, as have applied to the auditors for that purpose beg leave to report that they find due to the Plaintiff the sum of sixty-five pounds, nineteen shillings and one penny, and other creditors as follows, viz : - - - - - £65:19s:1p

To Benoni Hathaway,	- - - - -	38: 8: 2
" Elijah Stiles,	- - - - -	3:12: 7 $\frac{1}{2}$
" Andrew Miller,	- - - - -	19: 0: 4
" John Roll,	- - - - -	34: 0:10 $\frac{1}{2}$
" John Stevens,	- - - - -	1:14: 0
" John Hathaway,		10: 4:11

Total. £173: 1: 0

The auditors further report that they find of the property taken on the attachment, viz : 1 calf in the hands of Benoni Hathaway, value 12s. 1 cow in the hands of Jonathan Hathaway, £3:13s:3p; 1 small chest; 1 pr. of silver shoe buckles; 1 silver watch; 1 pr. of silver rims of buckles; six silver tea spoons; one silver buckle; 1 pr. sleeve buttons; 1 silver tea tongs; 1 shirt; 1 pr. nankeen breaches; 1 vest; 1 pr. of thread stockings; 2 slips; 2 pillow cases; also about 10 shillings in cash in Sheriff Arnold's hands, and thirteen shillings and six pence in George Tucker's hands."

JOSEPH LEWIS,
MOSES ESTEY,
HIRAM SMITH.

On like motion the Court ordered Judgment.

In September, 1790, the Court ordered the auditors to "proceed to sell the personal estate of the Defendant, attached in this suit, and pay the proceeds of such sale to the creditors in whose favor judgment has been entered after deducting the cost." On motion of Mr. Russell, attorney for the Plaintiff.

No report of the sale appears and in fact no further light is thrown upon the case by the records. Rogers was no doubt assisted to escape by the men of means and influence with whom he had "played Ghost" and who were busily engaged in hiding the facts of their ghostly pranks, as well by closing the mouths of those who like themselves were personally interested as by destroying the edition of the "Morristown Ghost" which appeared soon after.



